

# Himalayan Heights

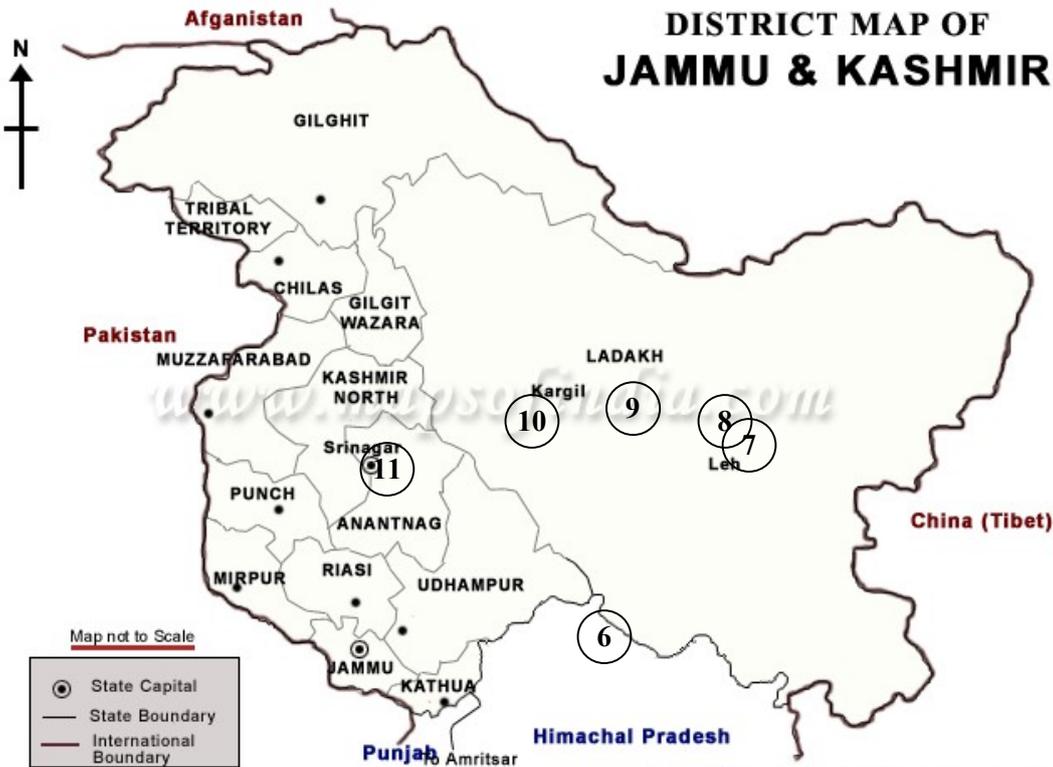
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[www.WorldOnWheels.tours](http://www.WorldOnWheels.tours)

*Life is a*  
***DARING ADVENTURE***  
*or nothing at all!*

# Himalayan Heights Motorcycle Safari



- Destinations and Places of Interest:**
1. Chandigarh
  2. Kasauli
- ↓
- Himachal Pradesh**
3. Shimla
  4. Manali
  5. Keylong
  6. Sarchu
- ↓
- Jammu & Kashmir**
7. Leh
  8. Khardung La
  9. Lamayuru
  10. Kargil
  11. Srinagar



↓  
Delhi



# Himalayan Heights Motorcycle Safari

## Itinerary for July 2021

Day	Date	Details	Distance
1	July 05 M	Arrange your flights to arrive in New Delhi today/tonight at latest; earlier if you prefer	
2	06 T	Early morning train to Chandigarh; familiarization of the motorbikes, short ride to Kasauli	60k
3	07 W	A half day climbing to the 'Hill Station' of Shimla at 2200m; ½ day explore Shimla	70k
4	08 T	From Shimla through winding hill roads to the old market town of Manali, at 2050m	270k
5	09 F *	Rest day exploring Manali, taking it easy and acclimatizing to altitude	---
6	10 S	Our first 'serious' climb, Manali to Keylong at 3350m (via the Rohtang La 3978m)	125k
7	11 S	Keylong across a lunar landscape to Sarchu at 4200m (via Baralacha La 4830m)	105k
8	12 M	A long challenging ride, Sarchu to Leh at 3500m (via Taglang La 5328m)	270k
9	13 T *	Rest day in Leh, sightseeing and further acclimatizing	---
10	14 W *	A morning visit to Thikse monastery, afternoon the ride to Khardung La: 5600m !	100k
11	15 T	From Leh to the 1,000-year-old Buddhist monastery of Lamayuru then on to Kargil	220k
12	16 F	Kargil to Srinagar, the beautiful, troubled capital of Kashmir	200k
13	17 S *	Rest day in Srinagar, on the houseboats of Dal Lake	-----
14	18 S	Domestic flight to Delhi; our tour officially ends at Delhi Airport... ... or you may choose to extend, for a visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra	1,420km

\* indicates consecutive night in same hotel, allowing for laundry, etc.

### Departure Date

For our Himalayan Heights Motorcycle Safari, you'll need to arrive into New Delhi on or before **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021** as shown above, by the evening at the latest. Please see suggestions for international flights herein.

### Tour Operator

This Motorcycle Safari is one of several itineraries offered by **World On Wheels**, Australia's first professional tour operator specialising solely in international motorcycle adventures. Operating for 20+ years as **Ferris Wheels**, Mike Ferris pioneered the Himalayan Motorcycle Safari concept in 1994 with his first crossing of the world's greatest mountain range by an Australian group of riders. In 1995, by now a qualified travel agent, he took his first commercial safari to the Khardung La in Ladakh (India), at 5,602 metres the highest road in the world. Mike and Denise Ferris now operate and personally lead annual **World On Wheels** motorcycle safaris to diverse destinations such as Nepal and Bhutan, Turkey, Morocco, Peru-Chile-Bolivia, Rajasthan, Iceland, the Dalmatian coast, Mexico-Guatemala-Belize, the Baltic States and South Africa, as well as this one through the Indian Himalaya.

**Be aware that this itinerary is a guide only and may need to change due to weather, road conditions or other factors. Please be flexible, but rest assured your Tour Leader will make the final day-to-day decisions only after consultation with our agent in Delhi, local authorities and group members.**



## Package Price

The Himalayan Heights tour price, excluding airfares and joining in New Delhi, is US\$6,500-00. Riders must have a valid and unrestricted rider's licence. Pillion seats are welcome and we also have a limited number of seats available in our support vehicle, a 15-seater minibus which accompanies the riders for the Safari – price for pillion or passenger is US\$6,000-00. Please note that our prices are subject to exchange rates and we reserve the right to alter any pricing, pursuant to Clause 9 of our Terms and Conditions, up to the date of final payment.

In this itinerary our tour prices are shown in US\$ for greatest stability and we ask for the equivalent in AU\$ at the prevailing daily exchange rate. The website to be used for daily foreign exchange calculations is: [www.westpac.com.au/business-banking/services/foreign-exchange-rates/](http://www.westpac.com.au/business-banking/services/foreign-exchange-rates/) We request a US\$1,000 deposit and will invoice you in US\$ thereafter for the remaining balance, but you have some flexibility as to when to pay. Final payment will be due 60 days before the tour date, but if you choose to pay us say 90 or 120 days beforehand because you feel the forex rate is favourable, this works well for everyone all round.

## Price includes

- Full motorbike rental for the duration of the Safari (500cc Enfield Bullet)
- Clean, friendly, mid-range accommodation throughout the Safari, nights 1 to 13 inclusive
- Twin-share basis; (single room supplement, additional US\$900-00) <sup>1</sup>
- All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Experienced guide, local agent and Enfield mechanics
- Minibus support vehicle and driver, for luggage transport and assistance
- Spare parts, tools, medicines, first aid equipment
- All fuel costs, maintenance and repairs, third party insurance for the bikes
- Airport transfers if arriving & departing via our suggested Singapore Airlines flights
- A complimentary *World On Wheels* long-sleeved Safari shirt, luggage tags and Himalayan maps

<sup>1</sup> Accommodation is provided on a twin-share basis and if you're on your own we'll do our best to bunk you in with an acceptable roommate. But if you're the last person to book, there's obviously a 50-50 chance you'll have to take a room on your own and will therefore be liable for the single room supplement. So the moral of the story is, book early or bring your own roommate with you. Or preferably both!

## Price excludes

- Airfares to/from Delhi (approx. Au\$1,800-00)
- Comprehensive travel insurance policy, which must cover use of large-capacity motorbike <sup>2</sup>
- Tourist visa for India (currently Au\$75-00, valid for six months)
- Medical examination and vaccinations before departure (recommended)
- Expenses of a personal nature such as postage, laundry, souvenirs and all drinks
- Tips for staff at tour completion; optional but always appreciated, US\$100-00 suggested <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Please note that a motorcycle safari overseas must be considered one of life's more adventurous pursuits and therefore personal travel insurance is mandatory. If you wish, we can arrange comprehensive travel insurance for you (Australian clients only). **Be aware**, however, that any travel insurance ceases immediately on return to your own country, even if on-going medical treatment or surgery is required. Private health cover or government Medicare resumes at that point.

<sup>3</sup> A note on tips. We recognize tipping is not generally part of the antipodean psyche, but it is pretty much expected in most other parts of the world. Daily hotel porters will expect a small reward for carrying your bags to your room, and our mechanics, drivers and support staff anticipate reasonable tips to supplement their



modest wages whilst on tour with us. We'd like to suggest something like US\$100-00 is affordable for your two weeks (only about US\$7-00 per day), distributed amongst the crew. If you've had a good time, we would encourage you to donate generously! (... if you haven't, please let us know why).

### **Our benevolent side**

It is important to us to make a positive contribution to some of the less privileged communities that we visit. Our strongest connection is with India, and in focusing our efforts we have decided certain communities therein are most deserving of our care and support. We provide financial support and facilitate the donation of clothing to the Ganga Brijghat Charitable Trust, a registered help center for poor and underprivileged people at Brijghat, on the shores of the Ganga (the holy river Ganges), about 90k east of Delhi.

### **International Flights**

You will have to arrange your own airfares through your preferred travel agent, or you may wish to take advantage of an arrangement we have with our local agent, Natasha Dann at iTravel. Phone 0402 171 106 or email her at [natasha@itravel-au.com](mailto:natasha@itravel-au.com) and mention you're joining the *World On Wheels 'Himalayan Heights'* tour; she has a copy of this itinerary and can arrange your route and flights as well as any stopovers or extensions you desire. Our suggested flight is Singapore Airlines SQ406 arriving in the evening, and if you arrive on this flight we will meet you at the airport for transfer to your hotel.

### **Food & Health**

Quality of food can obviously be a concern when visiting exotic foreign lands. We take care in selecting clean and reputable establishments for our meals and the local fare is not always as fiery and spicy as some people would have you believe. Our clients are often pleasantly surprised by the delicious meals available. Even so, an occasional upset stomach cannot always be avoided in remote areas, so we advise initial caution and we carry various medicines to ensure as much comfort as possible. Participants in any of our adventure activities are obviously expected to have a reasonably high level of health, fitness and capability, but **in all cases a consultation with your doctor is recommended** in order to identify necessary vaccinations and precautions, particularly if traveling overseas for the first time.

### **Climate & Clothing**

It is perhaps unfortunate (or perhaps not) that the mountain roads into and out of Ladakh are only passable for the warm months of the northern summer, basically July and Aug. Even then there is usually some snow, so good cold-weather gear is necessary. The air is crisp and clean in the mountains and the days are usually sunny and warm, but the Himalaya is always unpredictable so we need to be prepared for any eventuality. We can promise you some very hot days, some very cold days, and some very wet days – possibly all in the same day! At times there will be little shade available, so plenty of sunscreen, sunglasses, hats and long sleeves will also be required. Jeans and our long-sleeved *World On Wheels* shirts tend to be the norm, with strong boots and riding gloves. Helmets should be brought with you from home, full-face or open-face a matter of personal preference.

Professional quality riding gear such as Cordura jackets, overpants and other protective clothing is an excellent investment and will go a long way to ensuring your comfort in what may sometimes be adverse conditions. Jackets are particularly versatile if they have a zip-in / zip-out padded liner for extra warmth and protection. But if you're susceptible to the cold, then probably a good set of thermal underwear would also come in handy. A couple of other products we've used for several years and are happy to endorse are the Kevlar-lined jeans and clothing from Draggin Jeans in Melbourne ([www.dragginjeans.com.au](http://www.dragginjeans.com.au)) and those Velcro alternatives to 'occy' straps from Andy Strapz ([www.andystrapz.com](http://www.andystrapz.com)).

And while we're giving plugs, we'd like to suggest you consider a Rider Improvement course, regardless of your experience or perceived ability on a motorcycle, to brush up on your skills prior to joining an international riding safari. We've recently teamed up with motoDNA as our Adventure Training partner. An Australian outfit boasting an impressive array of hugely talented instructors (Mark McVeigh, Chris Vermeulen, Garry McCoy, Peter Goddard, Kevin Magee, Mark Willis....) they have the skills and the syllabus to get the most out of your riding ability, which will give you the weapons you need to survive and enjoy your next ride, whether it be the daily commute or an international adventure with *World On Wheels*. They offer track training, road training, off-road courses, bush bashing, sand and water techniques, you name it, in venues up and down Australia's east coast.

### **Other important information you should note**

India is not everyone's 'cup of tea'. It can be an extreme assault on the senses. In order to fully appreciate India's true beauty, you will need the ability to leave western values behind and turn a blind eye to some of the harsher aspects of life in a developing nation. If you can do this, you will find it truly a rewarding experience.

India can be quite trying in other ways also. The riding conditions are sometimes arduous and whilst 200k or so would *appear* to be quite an easy day's ride, this is not always so. Some days may require us to be on the road early to beat the morning traffic, and the days can be long and hot. It is obviously expected that you are able to handle a motorbike competently and are fit and strong enough to cope with some demanding conditions. An important part of this is your mental approach and attitude. If you are the type of person who prefers lounging by the poolside with a dry martini, then perhaps this motorcycle safari is not for you. Try Club Med instead! (But having said that, at least one of our hotels *does* have a pool, so bring your swimsuit with you!)

Be prepared to rough it a bit, be prepared to accept delays and hastily changed plans, be prepared to be tolerant of India's oft-bungling bureaucracy and ineptitude. Be flexible and above all, bring your sense of humour. But let's not pull any punches here. A tour such as this is potentially a dangerous undertaking; it's inherent in the very nature of the trip. You'll be on an unfamiliar bike, on unfamiliar roads in unfamiliar traffic conditions. It is important for you to recognize this and accept ultimate responsibility, firstly for joining and secondly for riding in a circumspect manner for the duration of the tour. Please read and acknowledge Paragraph 16 of our Terms and Conditions! (End of sermon)

### **The Classic 'Royal' Enfield Bullet**

Originally manufactured by The Royal Enfield Motorcycle Co of Redditch, Worcestershire, production of the Enfield ceased in Great Britain due to financial difficulties in the mid-1950s. The Indian subsidiary acquired the production line, transferred operations to Madras and simply continued to build Enfield Bullets without bothering to change any original design specifications. To this day they continue to churn out brand new, 70 year old bikes!

The Enfield is a true classic, with the single cylinder 500cc engine producing a deep, throaty rumble and powerful torque that have



prompted some to christen it the two-wheeled tractor. At idle speed you can audibly count the engine revolutions per minute. High speed is not what the Enfield is about (any faster than about 60kph in India is suicidal anyway!) it's about aesthetics, comfort and style. Riding an Enfield gives a pure, unadulterated pleasure - particularly

through the stunning scenery where you're going. It is the touring perfect bike for this part of the world, taking the rough roads easily in its stride.

## Detailed Daily Itinerary

**Day 1** of your trip involves the logistics of having all of you fly from different starting points at different times and somehow all meet up in Delhi. From your first glance at the sprawling metropolis you will immediately begin to appreciate that India is a land of contrasts, a land of diversity and variation unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Abject, squalid slums sit incongruously alongside amazing modern buildings of stunning beauty, like the lotus shaped Ba'hai temple. Five star hotels are served by 1950's-vintage Morris Oxford taxi cabs with engines the same size as their batteries. Something like 16 million people somehow manage to eke out an existence in this city whose levels of activity continue to escalate at an apparently unsustainable pace. At times confusing, at times challenging and at all times chaotic, Delhi is never still, never restful and never boring.

If arriving on our recommended flight you will be met at Delhi airport by our representative for your safe and rapid transfer to the hotel, to minimise what can sometimes be a testing introduction to the country.

**Day 2** has us on an air-conditioned train, the Shatabdi Express, heading north to the Haryana state capital of Chandigarh. This relatively small city is a much better place than Delhi in which to come to terms with the vagaries of your motorcycle! Even the experienced biker will find the Enfield brings a smile to your face, and the purring chug of the single cylinder will have you falling in love with it immediately.

So, we practise a bit in the carpark to the amusement of the inevitable crowd of local onlookers, before heading out onto the road to tackle India's daunting traffic for the first time. We deliberately break you in gently, with a short casual ride of only 60k to Kasauli where our hotel has a swimming pool.

**Day 3** sees us proceeding another 70k along a hilly and winding road to the Himachal state capital of Shimla, frequently alongside the railway track where the 'Toy Train' runs on narrow-gauge line through more than 100 separate tunnels in less than 100km, up to this picturesque hill station. Shimla was the summer national capital in the days of the British Raj, when the entire government would relocate up here for three months every year to avoid the sweltering heat of Delhi. The stately English houses are starting to look a little ragged around the edges these days, but the main street is still



called The Mall where the locals enjoy a daily *hawakhanna*, their evening stroll. We'll aim to be there in time for lunch, to allow plenty of time for wandering the delightful town in the afternoon.

**Day 4** and we are on our way to Manali, along twisting roads above stunning terraced slopes such as might be seen gracing the cover of travel magazines on Bali. Densely wooded hillsides flank the many streams of the area. We cross the turbulent Sutlej River in the morning and arrive at Manali in the afternoon on the banks of the boiling Beas ('Bee-Ahs'), a popular river for rafting or angling for India's famous *mahseer*, that monstrous freshwater fish weighing in at 30 kilos (65 pounds) or more! The world record stands at over 100 pounds. The narrow, winding road clings to the side of the sometimes steep gorge, with the river at times 300 metres directly below us. A road sign which always draws a smile advises, 'Darling I want you, but not so fast'. We encounter a rather daunting tunnel along the way; 3km through a hillside and without lighting! Make sure you know where the Enfield's headlight switch is, and slide your sunglasses down your nose.

**Day 5** we shall spend having a 'rest day' in Manali, which could mean trekking through the forest to check out a 500-year-old temple. Or we can just wander through the markets, picking up bargains in the Tibetan bazaars. Today is also our first acclimatising day, before we start the serious business of climbing the Himalaya proper.

**Day 6** is when we really start getting into it! On with the thick gloves and the jacket liner this morning. As we reach the snowline the sun will begin to disperse the mists, revealing the most sensational views ever imagined. Endless vistas stretch out in every direction from the 3,978-metre *Rohtang Jot*, ('pile of bodies') where we enter the remote world of the Lahaul Valley. Your head will be swivelling from side to side in amazement all the way to the village of Keylong, our home for the night.



**Day 7** Every turn into a new valley produces a breathtaking change of colour, texture, formation. Enormously deep river canyons combine with wind, rain and ice to carve impossible sculptures out of rock and gravel. To paraphrase the English author Douglas Adams, one section resembles the remains of a hundred Gothic cathedrals collapsed on top of one another. Several times today we may find water gushing across the road from glacier melt, causing us to dismount if deep; we push the bikes through with ignition turned off to prevent shorting out the spark plug. And yes, the water is *cold*. Our destination for today is a group of a dozen tents in a semi-permanent 'town' just before a police checkpoint at Sarchu (4,400m), which marks our entry into the state of J&K (Jammu & Kashmir).



**Day 8** and it just keeps getting better. The day starts with us tackling the 21 switchbacks of the *Gata Loops* up the side of a rocky mountain, then zipping along a flat, straight, lunar-landscape plateau where nomadic peoples tend their goats and yaks, which appear to have developed the ability to survive on a diet of gravel and sand. Then it's up, up and more up as we climb to the *Taglang La*, at 5,328 metres the second highest road in the world. (Don't worry, we're doing the highest in a couple of days, beyond Leh). At this altitude the Enfield as well as ourselves may have difficulty breathing the rarefied air -

there's not a lot of oxygen up here! It's also cold, so after the obligatory photographs we then proceed to legendary Leh, the Ladakhi capital and a stunning green oasis in this otherwise desolate area. Red coloured run-off from the copper-rich bulk of the Zaskar mountains (*zanz* means copper, *kar* is white) feeds the sacred Indus river, source of all life in this region.

**Day 9** is a Leh-day (pun intended) to allow further acclimatising. Either today or tomorrow we'll ride back along the Indus Valley a short way to *Thikse Gompa*, a dramatic Buddhist monastery clinging to the side of a hill and eerily similar to Lhasa's Potala Palace in Tibet. A little further on, Shey Palace houses a huge Buddha and a fine collection of *thankas*, Tibetan wall hangings. We can cross the river and ride back to Leh via Stok, where the Ladakhi royal family now reside. At sunset we can visit the splendid hilltop *Shanti Stupa* (peace pagoda) nearby, to watch the curtain be drawn on Leh.



**Day 10** has us heading further north. Our objective is the *Khardung La*, at 5,600 metres the highest road in the world open to traffic! We have the satisfaction of knowing that no-one anywhere has ever driven or ridden higher in the world than we are right now. **This is as close to heaven as we'll ever get on a bike!** This whole area is actually a military zone and special permission is obtained from the authorities because it is fairly close to the sensitive borders of both Pakistan and China, aka Tibet. Three nuclear nations staring each other down across the world's highest battle ground. If anyone should happen to get shot, please advise your Tour Leader as soon as possible. We return to Leh again for the night.

**Day 11** sees us following the Indus Valley, home of one of the oldest civilisations known to mankind. We head west with the river, passing some amazing scenery until we arrive at possibly the weirdest of it all; a ‘moonland’ of light-coloured composite rock wedged into a high little valley. Local speculation identifies it as a meteor or part of some other heavenly body crashed to Earth, but in reality it was a perched lake zillions of years ago. We then proceed a little further to Lamayuru, a spectacular 1000-year-old Buddhist *gompa* built in the traditionally accepted manner; ie clinging to an impossible hillside. This *gompa* is the oldest and one of the most important in Ladakh, but even more impressive is the medieval village beneath it. It’s a little catacomb of dark passageways and stone dwellings virtually unchanged in over a thousand years and well worth more than just a casual glance.



After lunch we head the bikes further west again, crossing the *Fatu La* at 4147m and the *Namika La* at 3760m, to arrive at a quiet little town called Mulbekh. Here, having spent the first week of our travels in Hindu-dominated Himachal and the second week in the Buddhist-majority Ladakh, we now cross the threshold into very-Muslim Kashmir and proceed through to Kargil for the night, unnervingly close to the disputed border with Pakistan and the site of several recent conflicts between the two nuclear nations.

**Day 12** will see us riding through Drass, whose main claim to fame apparently is being the second-coldest town on the face of the Earth (behind Hobart, presumably...). We then climb yet another pass, the *Zoji La* at 3529m and continue to Sonamarg, a stunning green valley sometimes described as the Switzerland of India. We proceed through the Vale of Kashmir to arrive at Srinagar, the long-troubled but exquisite capital of Jammu & Kashmir state, where accommodation consists of a couple of luxury houseboats moored on picturesque Dal Lake, which for centuries has moved men to poetry and music. Led Zeppelin fans may be familiar with Robert Plant’s haunting lyrics in *Kashmir*; “I am a traveller of both time and space, to be where I have been . . .”

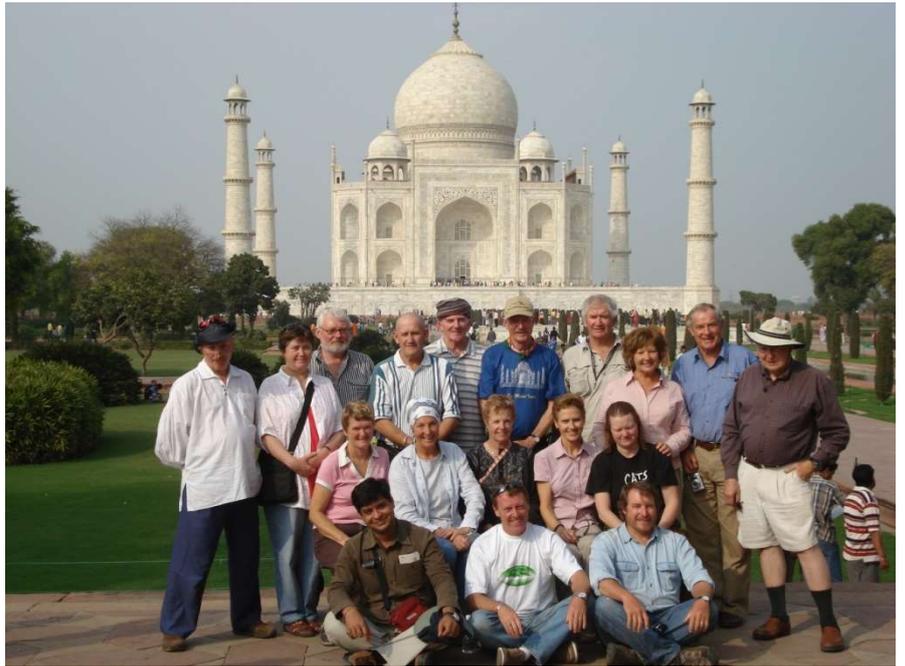
**Day 13** Srinagar has been the centre of the dispute over Kashmir since the troubles began at the time of Partition, 70 years ago. Violence has peaked and ebbed several times, all but destroying the tourism industry upon which much of the city’s economy depends. In the mid-1980’s, 650,000 tourists each year flocked to the beautiful lakes of Srinagar to enjoy the decadence of lazing on a houseboat for a week. A decade later only 5,000 per annum were venturing into Kashmir, although the position has improved considerably in more recent years. We’ll spend a day here to judge the situation for ourselves, lounging around on our houseboats or paddling through the city’s quiet backwaters in a *shikhara*, the unique Kashmiri gondola-style paddled boat.



**Day 14** We have a late-morning flight from Srinagar back to Delhi, where the tour officially ends. But if you wish to extend for the optional Taj Mahal visit, our local business partners can help with a hotel room and the necessary transport.

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**(Day 15)** Today we get to view the road from a different perspective. We charter a bus to take us 200k south to the one-time Moghul capital city of Agra, home of the Taj Mahal. The magnificence of the Taj cannot be overstated; it is simply the most superb building and is regarded as the world's Greatest Monument to Love. We'll also take in the impressive red-sandstone Agra Fort before heading back to Delhi on our air conditioned bus.



Further trip notes including a list of essential clothing and equipment to take, health considerations, visa formalities, etc, will be sent upon receipt of a completed Booking Form and deposit. Please contact our office any time for further information via email: [Adventure@WorldOnWheels.Tours](mailto:Adventure@WorldOnWheels.Tours)